Scaling up: how Maharashtra Metal Works is building for Europe

Shimona Vasaya, director and business head EU at Maharashtra Metal Works, speaks exclusively to *World Aerosols* about a tripled production capacity, deep embossing innovation and a deliberate push into the European aerosol market



India's aerosol packaging sector has long been characterised by high volumes and domestic focus. Maharashtra Metal Works (MMW) is making a calculated move to change that. With a new 120,000 square foot automated facility in Vasai, India, now operational, a Silver award from the Can Makers Awards on the shelf and a European directorate established in Paris, the company is positioning itself as a serious manufacturing partner for global aerosol brands.

Vasaya, who heads MMW's European operations, spoke to *World Aerosols* about the thinking behind the investment and what it means for brands looking east for their tinplate supply.

Tripling capacity through automation

The Vasai facility is the centrepiece of MMW's growth strategy. Where the company's Mumbai, India, operation produced around 60,000 cans per day, the new line is running at close to 200,000, effectively tripling output. At peak, the line operates at 300 cans per minute, with AI and machine learning-driven monitoring systems managing line synchronisation and minimising downtime.

"The principal bottlenecks we addressed were speed constraints, manual variability, changeover inefficiencies and welding consistency," Vasaya said. "In aerosol manufacturing, dimensional precision and seam integrity directly impact performance and safety."

The automation dividend extends beyond throughput. Weld uniformity, coating application precision and structural consistency have all improved. Vasaya describes these factors as fundamentals. "Pressure resistance, lacquer reliability and long-term shelf stability depend on these," she said.

Tooling for European diameters

MMW's existing tooling portfolio is built around 52mm and 65mm diameter cans, formats that reflect the structure of the Indian aerosol market. European brands, however, specify different diameters, so the company is adapting accordingly.

"We currently manufacture 45mm diameter aerosol cans and are evaluating expansion into 57mm tooling to better align with European standards," Vasaya said. The pace of that expansion is deliberate. Tooling investment requires careful calibration between capital expenditure and sustained demand, particularly in export markets. "Our objective is to broaden our diameter offering in a measured and commercially viable manner, ensuring that new tooling introductions are supported by long-term partnerships rather than speculative volume."

Award-winning embossing

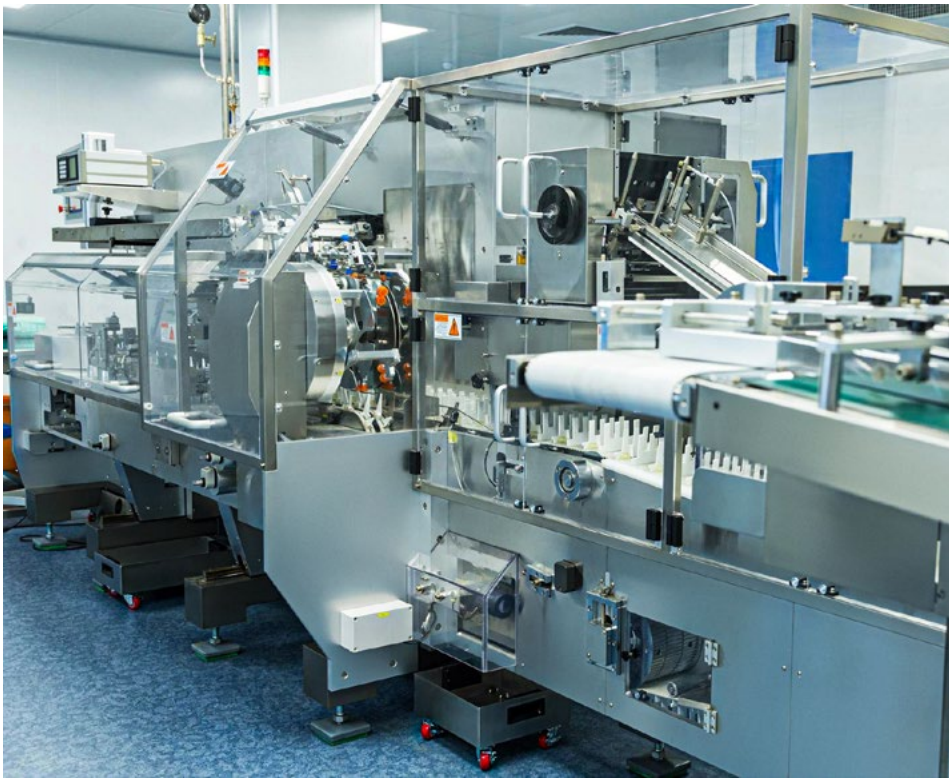
MMW's technical credentials extend beyond capacity. The company recently won a Silver award at the Can Makers Awards for a 3mm deep embossed container produced for Jim Beam, a project that tested the limits of metal forming. "Achieving such depth while preserving material strength, particularly around corners and transitional surfaces, required multiple development cycles and precision die refinement," Vasaya said. Deep embossing exerts significant stress on metal flow, and maintaining sharp detail without distortion demands close control over tool design, sheet thickness and forming pressure.

The capability is not limited to spirits packaging. MMW's in-house R&D team can apply advanced forming techniques, including deep embossing, to aerosol formats, which is an increasingly relevant offer as personal care brands seek premium differentiation on shelf. "Provided pressure integrity and performance parameters remain uncompromised," Vasaya noted.

Lacquer systems and compatibility testing

Internal protection is a critical variable in aerosol can performance, and MMW uses epoxy-phenolic lacquer systems sourced from suppliers including Asian Paints PPG and Shalimar Paints, selected on the basis of formulation compatibility. Roller coating is applied to tinplate sheets prior to fabrication; following welding, a secondary internal lacquer is sprayed over the seam area, with an external anti-rust coating applied along the weld line. Dual oven curing cycles ensure full polymerisation and adhesion stability.

Hydrocarbon propellants and compressed gases do not typically require internal lacquering unless aggressive solvent systems are present. Three-month accelerated compatibility testing is conducted through an independent laboratory at a continuous 45°C exposure, with final compatibility and shelf-life validation generally undertaken by the brand owner. Under appropriate storage conditions, MMW's cans are designed for a 24-month shelf life.



MMW supplies empty tinplate cans exclusively

> **"In aerosol manufacturing, dimensional precision and seam integrity directly impact performance and safety"**

Flexible enough for European startups

MMW's standard minimum order quantity for printed aerosol cans is 20,000 units, a figure that reflects the economics of plate preparation, press setup and line calibration. For the smaller brands and test-market runs that are common in European personal care, that threshold can be a barrier.

Vasaya is pragmatic about the tension. "We do accommodate smaller trial volumes for startups and limited-edition projects," she said, noting that these runs involve additional changeover time and a modest price adjustment. Where possible, smaller orders are integrated into existing production schedules for matching diameters to optimise cost. "Flexibility in aerosol manufacturing must be balanced with production discipline — and we approach this pragmatically."

Decoration: offset, 360-degree, tactile

On the decoration side, MMW operates Crabtree Vickers automated offset printing presses. Aerosol cans can be produced with full 360-degree offset decoration, matte and gloss finishes, tactile varnishes and custom surface treatments. The company is also introducing a new four-colour inline printing unit this year to enhance decorative precision and production efficiency.

MMW supplies empty tinplate cans exclusively, with filling managed by clients or their designated contract partners. This allows the company to maintain strict manufacturing quality control within its defined scope.

Europe as a strategic priority

For Vasaya, this year is less about rapid expansion than about structured engagement. MMW's presence at Paris Packaging Week earlier this year was a statement of intent, and Paris now serves as a direct point of contact for European clients.

"Our direction for 2026 is clear: strengthening operational depth in India while establishing structured and accountable engagement in Europe, built on consistency, technical integrity and long-term partnership," she said.

For aerosol brands sourcing tinplate in a tightening supply landscape, the combination of tripled capacity, improving European tooling alignment and a dedicated European presence may be worth a closer look.

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